

English Essay Checklist and Grading Rubric**

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH (11 points total)

1. Start with a lead sentence that relates to significant choices or advice in life (2 points).
2. Write a 1-3 sentence summary of a selected text that includes the name(s) of the author(s) and title of the text. The summary should also include important plot details that revolve around the main character. Be sure to explain the setting of the text (2 points).
3. Describe the conflict that the main character faces AND give experiences that have guided or influenced his or her life, decisions, and outlook to provide the back-story or context to understand the character's conflict (2 points).
4. Identify two choices or courses of action that the character has to choose between (2 points).
5. Thesis statement: State your claims about the character's choice or advice and identify what that decision reveals about the character and his or her identity, family or community, and decide whether it is a positive or negative decision (3 points).

BODY PARAGRAPH (14 points total)

1. Use a transition word and write a **topic sentence** about the character's crossroad event (2 points).
2. Support your claim about the character with **one textual example** from the text about the character's choice or advice (2 points).
3. Add a **quote** with proper citation that matches the textual examples about the character's choice or advice (2 points).
4. Explain the quote in your own words and evaluate how the textual example and the matching quote support the claim about the character's choice or advice (2 points).
5. Then use **another textual example** to EXPLAIN THE PURPOSE or REASON behind the character's choice or advice (2 points).
6. Include ONE or more **lines from the poem** that supports character's conduct and purpose or reason. Cite the poetry as (Name of Poet, "Poem Title," lines _ - _) (2 points).
7. Explain in your own words how the poem supports your explanation and evaluation of the character's decision at the crossroads (2 points).

CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH (5 points)

1. Write a "clincher" sentence to explain the lessons that are learned by the character that chooses or advises others (2.5 points).
2. Use those lessons to give advice about how people should make crossroad decisions (2.5 points).

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LANGUAGE AND GRAMMAR (10 points)

1. You avoid first person and second person pronouns (I, you , me us, we, our) (2.5 points).
2. You include specific and vivid words and avoid vague words (good, bad, nice, stuff, things, okay) (2.5 points).
3. You use complete sentences and do not use fragments (2.5 points).
4. You use correct capitalization and spelling of proper nouns for names of characters and geographic locations and for words that follow the IE rule, include homophones, are plural nouns, or third person singular verbs in the present tense (2.5 points).

Advice and Reminders for Your Essay

- Your essay should not use first or second person (Avoid I, me, you, we, us, our).
- The body paragraph must include ONE direct quote that is provided in the OFFICIAL QUOTE BANK from each text with analysis of how the quotation fits your overall advice.
- The body paragraph must include TWO TEXTUAL EXAMPLES.
- Cite the texts using the following in-text citation format that includes the author(s) name followed by the page number. **Examples: Gene admits that he intended to kill Finny when he says, “I was on active duty all my time at school; I killed my enemy there” (Knowles 204).**
- The body paragraph must also contain lines from the poem.
- Cite the poem in this manner (Name of Poet, “Poem Title” lines a-b).

8th Grade English Final— Essay Rubric

COMPONENT OF ESSAY	Not Done or Insufficient	Developing	Good	Excellent
Introduction paragraph: You wrote a lead sentence that directly relates to crossroads and choice or advice that the character makes and offers or receives. You include a summary of the text and provide the setting, back-story and conflict for the character. You include author name(s), title, and a thesis statement summarizing your observations of character choice or advice at the crossroads.	0-5 You don't write a lead and only include a brief summary of the text that is not accurate or relevant to the conflict of the main character. The back-story of his or her crossroads event is incomplete, and you don't include the author and title. You write a thesis statement that relates to plot details but not character choice or advice.	6-7 You don't write a lead and only include a brief summary of the text that is not accurate or relevant to the conflict of the main characters. The back-story of their crossroads event is incomplete, but you include both authors and titles and write a thesis statement that relates to plot details but not character choice or advice.	8-9 You write a general lead and include a mostly accurate and relevant summary of the text that traces the conflict of the main character and the back-story of his or her crossroad event. You include the author(s) and title and write a thesis statement that relates to character choice or advice.	10 You write a thematic lead and include an accurate and relevant summary of the text that traces the conflict of the main character and his or her back-story of the crossroads event. You include both the author(s) and title and write a thesis statement that relates to character choice or advice.
Body paragraph: Consistent with the checklist, you write a lead sentence and identify two specific examples and one matching quote for ONE CHARACTER/TEXT with proper citation to explore and analyze the choice or advice made by that main character at the crossroads and the reasons behind the choice or advice. You include a line from the poem to explore the choice or advice or reason behind the choice or advice and give a citation for the poetry.	0-7 You have a combination of 1 or fewer textual examples, quotes, and poetry lines that support your main idea. You don't explain the examples or quotes or use the poem to explore the underlying reasons for character conduct.	8-11 You have a combination of 2 textual examples, quotes, and poetry lines that support your main idea. You don't analyze the examples or quotes, but you use the poem to explore the underlying reasons for the character conduct.	12-14 You have a combination of 3 textual examples, quotes, and poetry lines that support your main idea. You analyze the examples and quotes, but you don't use the poem to explore the underlying reasons for character conduct.	15 You have 4 textual examples, quotes and poetry lines that support your main idea. You explain the examples and quotes and use the poem to explore the underlying reasons for character conduct.

<p>Conclusion Paragraph: Consistent with the checklist you write a “clincher” sentence to explain the lessons that are learned by evaluating the character’s choice or advice. You use those lessons to give advice about how people should make crossroad choices.</p>	<p>0-2 Your conclusion sentence re-states the character’s choice or advice, but doesn’t relate a thematic lesson or give specific advice about how people should make crossroad choices.</p>	<p>3-3.75 Your conclusion sentence reviews the choice or advice of the character, but doesn’t identify lessons learned by the character. You give general advice about how people should make crossroads choices.</p>	<p>4-4.5 Your conclusion sentence identifies important thematic lessons learned by both character, but gives non-specific advice about how people should make crossroad choices.</p>	<p>5 Your conclusion sentences identifies important thematic lessons that are learned by both characters and gives detailed advice about how people should make crossroad choices.</p>
<p>Language and Grammar: Consistent with the checklist, you avoid first person and second person pronouns (I, you , me, us, we, our). You include specific and vivid words and avoid vague words (good, bad, nice, stuff, things, okay). You use complete sentences and do not use fragments. You use correct capitalization and spelling of proper nouns for names of main characters and geographic locations and for words that follow the IE rule, include homophones, are plural nouns, or third person singular verbs in the present tense You accurately and correctly cite the quotations and lines from the text and the poem.</p>	<p>0-5 You use more than 5 person pronouns and there are 6 or more errors in grammar or punctuation. Some of your vocabulary is specific but there are many vague words Some characters names and geographic locations are either spelled wrong or are not properly capitalized. Many mistakes are made with respect to the page or line numbers, titles of the texts and poem, and the names of the authors.</p>	<p>6-7 You use more than 3-4 first and second pronouns and there are 3-5 errors in grammar or punctuation. Most of your vocabulary is specific but there are some vague words. Character names are spelled correctly, but some geographic locations are not properly spelled or capitalized. A few mistakes are made with respect to the page numbers, titles of the texts and poem, and the names of the authors.</p>	<p>8-9 You use 1-2 first and second pronouns and most proper nouns (names of characters, states, countries, etc.) are correctly spelled and capitalized. Most of your vocabulary is specific and there are only a few vague words. Page numbers, line numbers, and titles of texts and poem, and their authors’ names are mostly accurate and properly recorded.</p>	<p>10 You avoid first and second person pronouns and there are no errors in grammar or punctuation. All of your vocabulary is specific. All proper nouns (names of characters, states, countries, etc.) are correctly spelled and capitalized. Page and line numbers, titles of texts and poem, and names of their authors are correct and properly recorded.</p>

ESSAY TOTAL =

/40